

# Packaging guidelines



[www.parcelforce.com](http://www.parcelforce.com)

## Introduction

Parcelforce Worldwide provides a vital link for British businesses needing to send express shipments internationally and in the UK. We have a long history and pride ourselves on the dedication of our people to deliver high quality services for customers across the country.

We understand the importance of each parcel and we endeavour to ensure that each and every parcel will arrive on time and in the same condition as despatched.

Due to the scale of our operation most of which is automated, it is very important to ensure that your items are packaged correctly and in accordance with our guidelines.

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# General advice

We know how important it is that your parcel arrives safely and undamaged. Packaging items carefully gets them off to a good start. These reminders may help you:

## Please check that we can accept your parcel

Prohibitions or restrictions may apply to your goods, please see [www.parcelforce.com/customerinformation](http://www.parcelforce.com/customerinformation) for full details. In addition, for export parcels it is your responsibility to ensure that goods you are sending are not prohibited by governmental or customs legislation in the country of delivery. Ignoring them can lead to delays, accidents or damage to other parcels.

By agreeing to the Parcelforce Worldwide conditions of carriage, you agree to ensure that any parcels you are sending do not contain prohibited goods. You may also need to sign a declaration to this effect on despatch documentation. For parcels being sent to non EU destinations, you will need to declare the contents on the customs pack and commercial invoice.

## Wrap each item in the parcel individually

This takes a little longer, but offers better protection because there's no movement of contents. Place all items within an inner box and wrap them with bubble wrap. When sending printers, ink cartridges must be removed from the printer and packaged separately in a manner that cannot contaminate any other item. Contents should be placed in a rigid cardboard box and sealed to prevent opening during transit.

## Protect fragile items on their journey

Please ensure that all electrical items are secured within the outer packaging using travelling screws and polyblock surrounds. Using the original retail packaging is a good starting point for electrical items, but further packaging will usually be needed. If suitcases or outer hard cases are used as outer packaging, then that outer packaging will not be covered for damage.

## Prevent movement of items in transit

Please ensure that multiple items within a parcel do not touch. Place contents in a firm cardboard box, closed so that it cannot come open during transit.

## Use strong outer packaging

A corrugated fibreboard box with a good quality outer wrapping is best. Sub-standard and damaged cartons can cause problems.

## Seal the parcel well

Seal all open edges of the parcel with 48mm/50mm wide plastic or reinforced carton tape on both the top and bottom of your package. Ordinary household adhesive tape isn't usually strong enough. For heavier items you'll need a strong outer carton, closed with tape. String around boxes is not suitable as this can get caught and cause damage.

## Do not strap multiple boxes together

This may cause them to become damaged. Either place all items in one large outer carton or send them in separate parcels. **We will not pay compensation for loss on parcels that are strapped together.**

## Clear, accurate addressing

Make sure all the address information including telephone number and postcode is in the documentation. This should be completed accurately and firmly attached. Please also ensure that the service barcode labels are securely attached to the parcels and clearly visible.

## Always use strong outer packaging

A new and thick walled corrugated cardboard box with a good quality Kraft outer wrapping is recommended for the despatch of most items. The larger the size and weight of an item, the thicker and larger an outer box should be used.

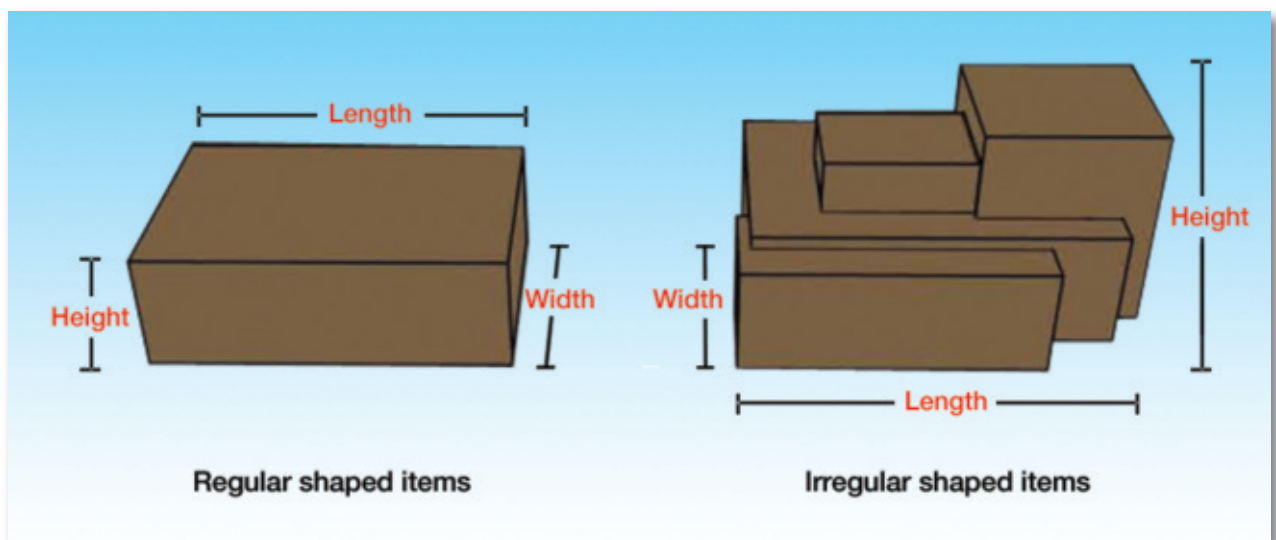
Always make sure the cardboard box allows adequate clearance for sufficient internal packaging to be used on the item(s) being sent.

A compensation claim for damage of contents will be deemed invalid if the parcel is inadequately packed or if the inner and outer packaging is not retained for verification.

## Parcel dimensions

Using the largest facing surfaces, length is the longest dimension and width the shortest. Height is measured at right angles to the largest surface. Girth is the distance around the item, measured at right angles to the length.

Volumetric weight applies for parcels being despatched to International Zones 4-12.



# Internal packaging

All Items must conform to the packaging requirements of Parcelforce Worldwide and of the destination country. Items not correctly packaged or containing dangerous or prohibited materials may be refused and returned to the Customer.

## Internal packaging must always be used as cushioning to:

- Prevent any damage from shock, vibrations, impacts and pressure during transit
- Prevent items within a parcel from touching
- Eliminate any internal movement of a parcels contents
- Provide clearance from the item and the external packaging

**If the internal packaging of an item is not sufficient even the best external packaging can be rendered inadequate.**

## Good examples of internal packaging materials:

- Bubblewrap
- Foam sheeting
- Polystyrene surrounds and ends – minimum for electrical goods
- Moulded and shaped foam – cosmetic protection only
- Cardboard – used as support structures
- Polystyrene peanuts/chips – eliminating movement of packaged items

## Bad examples of internal packaging:

- Paper – rolled, scrunched or shredded
- Polythene bags/bin liners
- Wood shavings/sawdust

## Bubble wrap

Bubble wrap is a good packaging material for providing a cushion to protect against shock. Always wrap each item individually and place in a separate strong container, this is to prevent items colliding during transit and any shocks or vibrations to the parcel damaging the internal contents. Always use enough bubble wrap to make sure that the contents of your parcel cannot move when you shake the box.

For heavy items bubble wrap should only be used for cosmetic protection. Ensure several layers are used as cushioning to prevent damage to weak areas of the item.

## Bubble wrap grades

Bubble wrap is available in several standard grades. Below is a list of the standard grades and recommended manufacturers uses as packaging:

- 1/16 inch – surface protection. Packaging of light weight products
- 1/8 inch – surface protection. Packaging of medium weight products. May be used as protective wrap
- 3/16 inch – packaging of light to medium weight products. May be used as protective wrap
- 5/16 inch – packaging medium weight items. Ideal for filling voids or blocking and bracing in items in parcels
- 1/2 inch – packaging heavy weight items. Ideal for filling voids or blocking and bracing in items in parcels

## Foam Sheeting

Foam sheeting provides excellent cosmetic/exterior protection and cushioning properties. It is ideal for packaging for protecting lightweight items.

## Polystyrene peanuts/chips

Polystyrene peanuts are pieces of expanded polystyrene which can be used to fill empty spaces in packages with lightweight items. They can also be used when double boxing items (especially electrical goods) as good protection against shocks and vibration as well as eliminating movement of a packaged and boxed item within another larger stronger box.

If using Polystyrene chips ensure the box is filled to its limit and there are not air gaps or pockets of air in the outer container. Shake the external packaging to ensure chips settle and top up till the outer container is full.

## Polystyrene blocks/surrounds

Polystyrene surrounds should be used on all electrical goods. Make sure the polystyrene blocks suspend and do not allow movement of the item.

# External packaging

## Good examples of external packaging:

- Cardboard box
- Wooden crate
- Plastic box / tube (able to be sealed)
- Metal case / tin

## Always use strong outer packaging

A new and thick walled corrugated cardboard box with a good quality Kraft outer wrapping is recommended for the despatching of most items. The larger the size and weight of an item the thicker and larger an outer box should be used.

Always make sure the cardboard box allows adequate clearance for sufficient internal packaging to be used on the item(s) being sent.

## Avoid using reused/recycled cardboard boxes

Cardboard boxes lose their strength and rigidity after transporting heavy items through a postal network and if used once they are inadvisable to be reused for a further despatching.

**Parcelforce Worldwide strongly advises using cardboard boxes for a single despatch only.**

Boxes made from recycled cardboard are not advised to be used as they are not as strong as newly produced boxes even if they are of the same size and thickness.

## Use a wooden crate if necessary

Larger and heavier items may be better protected in a cardboard box and wooden crate than a cardboard box alone. Parcelforce Worldwide advise for all heavy stoneware items, sculptures or large pottery pieces to first package the item in industrial bubble wrap and polystyrene surrounds and then place in a strong cardboard box filled with aircushions or foam chips to suspend the packaged item. The cardboard box should then be placed in a wooden crate to support the weight of the object and avoid the cardboard box splitting open during transit.

# Sealing and labelling

## Seal all parcels securely

Always make sure you seal all open edges of the parcel with 48mm/ 50mm-wide plastic or reinforced carton tape on both the top and bottom of your package. It is advisable to use multiple layers of tape to seal your parcel on larger or heavier parcels. Ordinary household adhesive tape is not strong enough for sealing cardboard boxes.

Never use string or strapping around parcels as this can cause delay or damage to your parcel if caught in mechanised areas of our network.

## Do not strap multiple boxes together

Never tape or strap multiple boxes together, unlabelled parcels which become loose in our network may not be able to be returned to sender or forward to the intended recipient. Either place all items in a larger container or send the items in separate parcels.

## Addressing and documentation

Always use clear and accurate address labels. Ensure that the full correct postal address and postcode/ zip code is written on your parcel. If you are ever unsure about a UK address, please use the address finder to check the intended recipients address on our website [www.parcelforce.co.uk](http://www.parcelforce.co.uk) before sending your parcel.

If available, please provide the phone number, including dial code, of the recipient your parcel. In case Parcelforce Worldwide have any queries regarding delivery, it is advisable to always include your own address and phone number on the outside and inside of your parcel.

To avoid any delay in transit always make sure that all necessary documentation is fully and accurately completed before sending. Failure to correctly declare the contents of an international parcel can lead to delay in delivery and excess charges.

## Orientation and fragile labelling

Parcelforce Worldwide will endeavour to manually handle all items with as much care as possible however we cannot guarantee the orientation of parcels through our network.

## Frozen/perishable goods

Ensure frozen items are fully labelled on all sides indicating the contents of the parcel are frozen goods. Packages must be clearly labelled "PERISHABLE". Fresh fruit, meat, fish and other perishable articles should be able to withstand a journey of up to 2 days and must be sent by next day services a minimum requirement within the UK. Ensure plants are fully labelled on all sides indicating the contents of the parcel are plants.

## Medical supplies

Prescription drugs sent for medical or scientific purposes, for example from a medical practitioner to a hospital, must clearly have the address of the sender on the parcel in case of non-delivery, so that they may be returned without delay.

# Packaging advice for specific items

## Batteries:

- Only dry batteries (for example AA or AAA batteries) in good condition and in their original sealed retail packaging may be despatched. Batteries from laptops, cameras, mobile phones and similar electronic goods, must be removed from the main body of the item and packaged separately but can form part of the same parcel/consignment.

## Bicycles:

- Remove the wheels and pedals from the main frame of the bicycle
- Wrap the pedals securely in bubble wrap
- Place a sheet of thick cardboard between the wheels and wrap them securely with thick bubble wrap
- Ensure that the whole bicycle frame is wrapped in thick bubble wrap
- Place bicycle into a strong cardboard box
- Ensure that the box is strong enough to withstand the weight of the contents
- Use polystyrene blocks or internal packaging to ensure the bicycle cannot move during transit

## Books:

- Wrap heavy / hardback books in multiple layers of bubble wrap and seal with sellotape
- Stack the books in a cardboard box which has no spaces and allows no movement of the books
- If needed place sheets of thick cardboard between the books and on the top and bottom of the books to remove space in the parcel and for added protection

## Car doors/bonnets/bumpers/body panels:

**Do not send these items in bubble wrap alone or taped in cardboard sheets.**

Car parts are very susceptible to cosmetic damage if incorrectly packaged. Due to their weight customers must ensure adequate packaging is used to avoid scuffing and dents which may render the item unusable.

Parcelforce Worldwide advise that these items are despatched in shipping packaging designed specifically for the item being sent.

**Packaging must always include the following:**

- A strong outer container such as a double walled corrugated cardboard box or wooden crate
- Strong internal packaging which braces the item in place to avoid any internal movement i.e. polystyrene blocks / surrounds or cardboard bracing
- Industrial thickness bubble wrap or plastic sheeting for cosmetic protection only. **This is not sufficient or designed for internal packaging alone as it offers no structural protection**

Heavy metal items such as car bonnets or car doors Parcelforce Worldwide advise sending via pallet services.

## Car wheels:

- Polystyrene blocks must be used either side of the wheels to provide internal cosmetic protection from the inner wall of the outer shipping container such as a double walled corrugated cardboard box or wooden crate
- Car wheels must always be boxed before shipping

## China/ceramic items:

- Wrap each individual item in multiple layers of bubble wrap
- Place each wrapped item into an individual inner cardboard container
- Wrap smaller boxed items again with bubble wrap and seal with sellotape
- Place all boxed and wrapped and boxed items into a larger, strong outer cardboard box
- Surround the inner items with cushioning material (such as polystyrene chips) to eliminate movement and protect the items from impacts
- Close the outer container with multiple layers of strong tape
- Place 'Fragile' labels on all sides of the outer box

# Computers

Computers, monitors and printers, are complex, fragile and sensitive pieces of electrical equipment. All computers despatched using Parcelforce Worldwide services must be packed adequately to protect them from shock and vibration that occurs during transit.

## Manufacturers packaging is usually designed for one of the following:

- To ship the product once
- For the storage of the item and therefore must not be used as outer packaging
- For the bulk shipping of multiple items on a pallet and not for single despatch through an automated network, therefore it may not withstand shock and vibration associated with transportation

Reusing packaging weakens the packaging and increases the chance damage may occur. Packaging must only be used for a single sending.

**Parcelforce Worldwide strongly advise that all computers are double boxed before despatch.**



## Before packaging ensure that:

- All screws on PCI/AGP cards are tightened
- All screws on CD/DVD and floppy disc drives are tightened
- All discs are removed from drives
- All peripherals, USB and power cables are removed from the main unit
- The Power supply screws are tightened
- The processor heat sink and fan are securely attached, if needed pack anti static bubble wrap around the heat sink to eliminate any movement during transit



## Packing the unit:

- Place the main unit/tower in large polystyrene surrounds. If these were part of the computers original packaging ensure these are used as they are designed specifically for the computer purchased
- Ensure the polystyrene blocks used have no breaks or parts missing which could allow movement when boxed
- Industrial thickness bubble wrap (1/ 2 inch grade) can also be used in multiple layers around any exposed areas of the tower to ensure a secure fit when placed into an outer cardboard box



### Inner box:

- Place the computer and polystyrene blocks inside a very strong, multiple walled corrugated cardboard box. Ensure the cardboard box is new or has no creases, tears or breaks
- Ensure the box allows no movement of the polystyrene blocks and computer
- Seal the box well with multiple layers of 2 inch thick adhesive tape to ensure it cannot open



### Outer box:

- Once the computer has been packaged boxed and sealed, it should then be placed in a larger outer box filled with polystyrene chips
- Make sure the outer box allows minimum 4 inch clearance around all sides, top and bottom of the inner box
- Fill the box with a layer of polystyrene chips and place the inner box on top then pour more chips around the edges
- Ensure the box is filled to its limit and there are not air gaps or pockets of air in the outer box. Shake the outer box to ensure chips have settled and top up till the outer box is full
- Seal the box with multiple layers of thick tape. Ensure the parcel is fully labelled and that the full correct postal address and postcode/zip code is written on your parcel



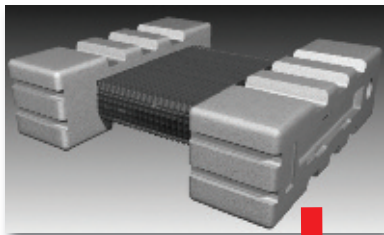
# Electrical/Electronic Items

The best way to despatch electronic items is using the original manufacturers packaging as a starting point and then adding further packaging for protection. Parcelforce Worldwide recommends all electrical items are double boxed as shown in the following example.



## Recommended packaging materials:

- Bubble wrap
- Polystyrene surrounds/ends
- Strong inner cardboard box
- Strong outer cardboard box
- Polystyrene chips



## Packing the unit:

- Place the electrical item in thick polystyrene blocks that do not allow any movement of the unit in the cardboard box you are using as outer packaging
- Wrap the exposed areas of the unit in minimum 2 inches of bubble wrap



- Place the packaged unit in your cardboard box and seal with thick tape
- Fill your outer box with a layer of polystyrene chips and place the inner box on top, pouring more chips around the edges to eliminate any movement
- Make sure the outer box allows minimum 4 inch clearance around all sides, top and bottom of the inner box



- Ensure the outer box is filled to its limit and there are no air gaps in the foam chips
- Shake the external packaging to ensure chips have settled and top up until the outer container is full



- Seal the box with multiple layers of thick tape
- Ensure the parcel is fully labelled and that the full correct postal address and postcode/zip code is written on your parcel

## Packaging for electrical/electronic items should always include:

- Thick polystyrene surrounds
- Strong outer cardboard box
- Bubble wrap in a sufficient quantity to absorb impact
- All cables and accessories must be sufficiently packaged if despatched in the same box as the main unit
- Remote controls must be wrapped in bubblewrap and separately boxed. Ensure batteries are removed before despatch

## Engine parts

Small precision made engine parts such as gears, valves, pistons, piston rings, fly wheels etc require sufficient internal packaging to avoid any damage which may render the parts unusable.

- Any sharp edges must be covered to ensure they cannot pierce the outer shipping container
- Use folded layers of bubble wrap, thick card board or polystyrene chips as internal packaging
- These items then must be packaged in a strong double walled corrugated cardboard box, strong enough to withstand the weight of the item(s)

## Leaflets and documentation

- When despatching documentation line up the stack of documents and strap in bundles and wrapped in polythene to avoid a central centre of mass in external packaging
- Stack the bundles and place in a cardboard box, make sure there are no spaces in the outer box which can allow movement of the contents
- Make sure the box used is strong enough to contain the documents and if necessary double box the documents
- Always ensure parcels containing documents are very well sealed, use multiple layers of thick, wide, strong tape

**Do not despatch documents / leaflets wrapped only in paper or in a cardboard box which cannot withstand the weight of the contents or may tear open during transit due to the weight of the documents.**

## Liquids and powders

- All liquids must be placed in strong, leak-proof container
- The container must then be placed in a strong outer container
- There must be enough absorbent material between the inner and outer containers to absorb all the liquid should the package break
- Screw type lids or covers should have rubber/ cork washers
- Friction-top covers must be fastened with metal clips
- Close the container and tape the cover seam with reinforced tape
- Wrap the container in a fully sealable strong plastic bag or plastic sheeting. If plastic sheeting is used tightly seal all seams with reinforced tape
- Package the sealed inner container(s) in a strong outer box

## Live creatures which are accepted on our services

- Creatures despatched must be free from disease
- They must be packaged in a safe and secure cage or tube, as per industry standards, to prevent breakage or leakage during transit and handling
- The contents must be easily identifiable on the container. The packaging must be clearly labelled with the type of the creatures contained

## Musical Instruments

- Musical instruments must always be despatched in a hard case designed for the item sent and that all strings are loosened before sending
- If needed, use packaging within the instrument case to ensure the item cannot move during transit
- The hard case should then be packaged in a thick cardboard box or wooden case with sufficient internal soft packing to prevent any movement to the case
- Keyboards and synthesizers must be packaged in accordance with our guidelines for electrical equipment. Polystyrene surrounds and a thick multiple walled corrugated cardboard box must be used as a minimum for packaging

# Guitars

## General advice

Guitars must be placed in a sealable hard case designed for the instrument. The case must be then packaged for protection and placed in a strong cardboard box.

Guitars must not be despatched in trapezoid cardboard boxes alone, these are not designed for, and are not suitable as protection through our network. Also leather or cloth cases do not provide adequate protection, especially for string instruments such as guitars.

Please note that if the instrument hard case is used as the external packaging, then the case itself will be treated as packaging and not contents, as a result the case will not be covered for compensation in the event of damage.

**Parcelforce Worldwide recommend any instrument strings be loosened or removed before sending.**



- Strings under tension can cause a whiplash effect, snapping the neck near the headstock if the parcel is subject to impact during shipping



- Once the strings have been removed ensure all screws on the backplates, pick guards and pickups are tightened to avoid damage during shipping



## Packing guitars

- Guitars must be placed in a sealable hard case designed for the instrument
- If needed use bubble wrap around the body and neck to eliminate any movement
- Close the case and make sure all latches are securely closed. Use strong tape to ensure the case cannot open due to the weight of the guitar



- Place the guitar case within a strong double walled corrugated cardboard box
- Use polystyrene blocks or internal packaging to ensure the case cannot move inside the box during transit

## Nuts, bolts, screws, nails, small machine parts

- Due to their heavy weight, nuts, bolts, small machine parts etc are able to burst even strong packing
- Such items should be packaged in very thick plastic bags in small quantities to eliminate the chance of bursting due to movement during transit

## Paper and card items (e.g. maps, prints)

- Place the item between two sheets of card which are several inches larger around each edge
- Roll the item and 2 layers of card into a cylinder
- Insert the rolled item and card into a strong plastic or cardboard cylindrical mailing tube
- If necessary place cushioning material at either end of tube to eliminate movement and protect the item
- Place plastic lid seals on each end of the tube and seal in multiple layers of strong tape
- For further protection wrap the tube in multiple layers of bubble wrap and place the tube into a cardboard box

## Perishable and frozen food

- Packages must be clearly labelled "PERISHABLE". Packages of fish should be smoked or chilled, and sealed in vacuum packs before being packaged. In all cases they must be enclosed in adequate polystyrene containment to prevent contamination
- It is the responsibility of the shipper to package all perishable articles in such a manner that during transport within the system the contents are kept at an appropriate temperature that is unlikely to give rise to a risk to health

## Pictures in frames

- Wrap the frame in thick bubble wrap for cosmetic protection
- Place a wooden board in front and one behind the pictures frame
- Polystyrene corners should then be placed firmly between the corners of the frame and the boards
- Place the packaged frame in a strong cardboard box or preferably a wooden box or crate which allows no movement of the contents

## Thick viscous liquids (e.g. grease)

- Package the same as liquids
- It is recommended that you use a metal tin and not a glass jar to contain the viscous liquid
- Instead of plastic bags/sheeting grease proof paper to prevent leakage and contaminating other parcels in the event of breakage

## Tyres

- Tyres must always be boxed before shipping
- Ensure the box is strong enough to withstand the weight of the tyres being despatched

## Vinyl records

- Sort the records according to size and keep in bundles of the same size records
- Always keep records in their sleeves
- Place a sheet of cardboard between each record in their sleeve
- Ensure the records always are packaged so they cannot bend by placing a piece of fibre board or wood at either end of your bundles of records
- Place your packaged records in a strong cardboard box filling any spaces with polystyrene chips

## Disclaimer

This packaging information is provided by Parcelforce Worldwide as a guide. It is not provided as a guide to packaging ALL items which may be sent on our services.

Parcelforce Worldwide make no assurances that by following the advice in this document your parcel will not be damaged during transit. The adequate packaging of an item for transit on our services is solely the responsibility of the sender.

For more advice please contact our Customer Service Department – please note that all calls may be recorded for quality and training purposes:

Phone: **08448 00 44 66**

Email: **[parcelforce@parcelforce.co.uk](mailto:parcelforce@parcelforce.co.uk)**